

REMARKS

In the last Office Action, claims 45 and 50-53 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by USPN 6,304,527 to Ito et al. ("Ito"). Claims 46-47 and 54-56 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ito in view of USPN 5,808,973 to Tanaka. Claims 1, 19-20, 32-40, 42 and 44 were allowed, and claims 48, 49, 57 and 58 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim and were otherwise indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In accordance with this response, applicants have elected to accept the allowed and allowable subject matter in order to expedite issuance of their patent.

Independent claim 45 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of allowable dependent claim 48, and claim 48 has been canceled. Dependent claim 49 has been amended to depend on base claim 45 rather than now-canceled claim 48.

Independent claim 50 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of allowable dependent claim 57, and claim 57 has been canceled. Dependent claim 58 has been amended to depend on base claim 50 instead of now-canceled claim 57.

Claims 46-48 and 51-57 have been canceled.

As a result of these amendments, only allowed claims 1, 19, 20, 32-40, 42 and 44 and allowable claims 45, 49, 50

and 58 remain pending in the application. In view of the Examiner's indication of allowability concerning claims 48 and 57, which have now been incorporated into their respective base claims, and the allowability of claim 49 and 58, which depend on amended base claims 45 and 50, these claims are now allowable for the reasons stated by the Examiner.

As only allowed and allowable claims remain pending, the application is now believed to be in allowable form. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and passage of the application to issue are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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MAILING CERTIFICATE

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Name



Signature

December 9, 2004

Date